



Advisory Announcement

Released: October 17, 2023

CONTACT:

Christy Gleason, Area Management Biologist
Shane Ransbury, Asst. Area Management Biologist
Bonnie Borba, Fall Season Research Biologist
907-459-7274 (Fairbanks)
Toll free fishing schedule and counts: 1-866-479-7387

2023 Yukon River Salmon Fall Fishery Announcement #21 **Fall Update #13, Yukon Area Salmon Fishery**

The Yukon River fall chum salmon run is the fifth lowest on record (1974–2022), while the coho salmon run is the second lowest (1995–2022). The fall chum salmon run size is approximately 290,000 fish compared to a historical run size of 948,000 fish. The coho salmon run size is approximately 65,000 fish compared to a historical run size of 222,000 fish. Final run size estimates will be available after assessment and harvest estimates are available postseason.

The Teedriinjik (Chandalar River) goal of 85,000–234,000 fall chum salmon was met and subsistence fishing for fall chum salmon was opened in this river in mid-September. The other Yukon River and Canadian-origin fall chum salmon stocks are poor and unlikely to be meet escapement goals; therefore, the upper Yukon River drainage remains closed to subsistence, personal use, sport, and commercial fishing for fall chum and coho salmon. Fishing restrictions will be relaxed in Upper Yukon Districts once the salmon migration is complete in each area. Closures will remain in effect in important salmon spawning drainages through December. Assessment in the Upper Yukon continues as the Fishing Branch River weir/sonar is ongoing and spawning surveys to enumerate fall chum and coho salmon will occur in the Tanana River drainage in October through early December.

Daily, cumulative, and historical data for most of the assessment projects listed can be accessed online at www.adfg.alaska.gov/yukonfishcounts.

Fall Assessment Projects

Sonar Project near Pilot Station / ADF&G

This project concluded on September 7. Genetic mixed stock analysis (MSA) was applied to the sonar passage counts and resulted in an estimate of 290,000 fall chum salmon that have entered the river since July 19. This level of passage is below the median cumulative passage of 947,000 fall chum salmon. The cumulative passage of coho salmon was approximately 50,000, which is well below the median of 187,000 fish.

Teedriinjik (Chandalar) Sonar / USFWS

This project has concluded for the season. The cumulative passage of fall chum salmon, which includes a preliminary expansion after sonar operations ceased on September 26 through October 9, was 137,000 fish. This estimate is below the median passage of 192,000 fish. The Teedriinjik escapement goal range of 85,000–234,000 fall chum salmon was achieved. Run timing was one day early, compared to the average of September 13.

Eagle Sonar / ADF&G and Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO)

This project has concluded for the season. The cumulative passage of fall chum salmon, which includes a preliminary expansion after sonar operations ceased on October 6 through October 18, was 21,600 fish. This estimate is below the median passage of 161,000 fish. Run timing was three days early compared to the average of September 23. The interim management escapement goal range of 70,000–104,000 fall chum salmon will not be achieved.

Fishing Branch River Weir/Sonar / Yukon Territory Canada / DFO

This project began operations on August 30 and the cumulative passage is 10,449 fall chum salmon, which is below the median passage of 24,926 fish. Historically the fall chum salmon run is 98% complete by October 13 at this project.

Tanana River Escapement Assessment (ADF&G)

Escapement foot surveys (primarily counting fall chum salmon) begin in early October in the Delta River and typically occur weekly through the end of November. The Delta River is an index of escapement in the Tanana River and has a sustainable escapement goal of 7,000 to 20,000 fall chum salmon. Aerial surveys will also be conducted in various other areas in the Tanana River drainage for both fall chum and coho salmon in late October or early November during typical peak spawning times.

Stock Identification

Genetic mixed stock analysis on chum salmon has concluded for the season. The estimates for fish that passed the mainstem Yukon River sonar during the entire fall season, from July 19 through September 7, contained approximately 22% summer chum and 78% fall chum salmon. The fall component entering after July 19, were comprised of 41% Border/U.S. (Teedriinjik/Sheenjek/Draanjik), 17% Canadian, and 42% Tanana Fall stocks. The Canadian proportion is below the long-term average and is tracking with the poorer stock composition observed for Canada in the recent three years.

Age, Sex, and Length Composition

The age composition of 651 chum salmon sampled from the drift gillnets in the LYTF project through September 10, consisted of 78% age-4 and 18% age-5 fish, which compared to the 1983–2022 historical averages of 66% age-4 and 30% age-5. The percentage of female chum salmon through September 10 was 55%, which is below the 1986–2022 historical average of 58%. The average length of 572 mm is well below the 1981–2022 historical average of 592 mm. However, they are much larger than the previous two years.

The age composition of 126 coho salmon sampled from the drift gillnets in the LYTF project through September 10, consisted of 21% age-3 and 77% age-4 and 2% age-5 fish, which compared to the 1983–2022 historical averages of 16% age-3, 76% age-4, and 5% age-5. The percentage of female chum salmon through September 10 was 40%, which is below the 1986–2022 historical average of 47%. The average length of 540 mm is well below the 1981–2022 historical average of 575 mm.

Subsistence Management Actions**Nonsalmon**

Harvest of nonsalmon with 4-inch or smaller mesh set gillnets of 60 feet or shorter length is allowed in all subsistence areas during salmon closures. Fishermen should fish this nonsalmon gear in areas where resident species are more likely to be encountered. Harvest of nonsalmon with 6-inch or smaller mesh set gillnets is allowed in Lake Minchumina and in the Tolovana River drainage, including Minto Flats (see fishing permit requirements). Other legal gear types to take nonsalmon include hook and line with a rod or pole (excluding

District 6), hand line, longline, fyke net, dip net, beach seine, and spear. If closures are in place for a salmon species, they must be released alive immediately from nonsalmon gear (other than gillnets).

Salmon

Coastal District and Districts 1–4 (including Chevak through Ruby and the Koyukuk River):

Subsistence fishing for all species is open 24 hours per day, 7 days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnets and all other legal salmon and nonsalmon gear. All fish caught may be retained.

Closed area: The Koyukuk River drainage will remain closed through December 31. In the subsistence permit area of South Fork and the Middle Fork of the Koyukuk River, gillnet gear must be 3½ inches or smaller mesh size from January 1 to June 30.

A subsistence fishing permit is required to fish for all species in the South and Middle forks of the Koyukuk River above Bettles (including the communities of Wiseman and Coldfoot). Gillnet gear for nonsalmon in the Koyukuk permit area may only be used from August 20 to June 30 and must be 3½ inches or smaller mesh size.

Districts 5–6 (including Tanana through Eagle and the Tanana River):

Fishing for chum, coho, and Chinook salmon is closed except in the Teedriinjik (Chandalar River) drainage. Dip nets, beach seines, manned fish wheels, and hook and line gear may be used for pink salmon and sockeye salmon in all districts except District 6, where hook and line is closed for all species. Chum, coho, and Chinook salmon must be released alive.

In the Teedriinjik drainage:

Fishing for chum salmon is open 24 hours per day, 7 days per week with 6-inch or smaller mesh set gillnets, fish wheels, dip nets, hook and line, handline, and beach seines.

Closed Waters: The North Fork of the Teedriinjik drainage upstream from the mouth of Quartz Creek will remain closed by regulation.

Effective at the dates and times listed below, subsistence fishing for all species will be open 24 hours per day, seven days per week with 7.5 inch or smaller mesh gillnets and all other legal salmon and nonsalmon gear. Gillnet lengths will no longer be restricted to 60 feet.

District 5

- **8:00 a.m. Friday, October 20** in Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B, and 5-C (Tanana and Rampart).
- **8:00 a.m. Thursday, October 26** in Subdistrict 5-D Lower (Stevens Village and Beaver).
- **8:00 a.m. Monday, October 30** in Subdistrict 5-D Middle and Upper (Birch Creek, Fort Yukon, Central, Circle, and Eagle).

Closed area: The Porcupine River drainage will remain closed through December 31. The North Fork of the Teedriinjik drainage upstream from the mouth of Quartz Creek will remain closed by regulation.

District 6

- **8:00 a.m. Monday, October 30** in Subdistricts 6-A, 6-B, and the Upper Tanana Area (Manley, Minto, Old Minto, Nenana, Healy, Cantwell, Lake Minchumina, Dot Lake, Tanacross, Tetlin, Tok, Northway, and Nabesna).

Closed area: The Kantishna and Nenana river drainages, excluding Lake Minchumina, will remain closed through December 31.

A subsistence fishing permit is required in the following areas:

All species

- Subdistrict 5-C from the western most tip of Garnet Island upstream to the ADF&G regulatory marker two miles downstream of Waldron Creek (Dalton Highway bridge area).
- The portion of Subdistrict 5-D Lower from an ADF&G regulatory marker two miles downstream of Waldron Creek upstream to the mouth of the Dall River.
- The upstream mouth of 22 Mile Slough to the U.S./Canada border.
- The Upper Tanana Area.

Salmon

- The Tanana River drainage up to the Wood River (Subdistrict 6-A, 6-B, and the Kantishna River drainage), excluding Lake Minchumina.

Northern pike

- The Tolovana River drainage (including Minto Flats).

Personal Use Management Actions

Subdistrict 6-C Salmon (from the regulatory marker at the mouth of the Wood River upstream to the downstream mouth of the Salcha River, which includes the communities of Fairbanks, North Pole, and Salcha):

Personal Use salmon fishing is closed.

Personal Use Whitefish and Sucker Fishing (in the Fairbanks Nonsubsistence Area, a portion of the Tanana River drainage from the Wood River upstream to the mouth of the Volkmar River on the north bank and the mouth of the Johnson River on the south bank, which includes Fairbanks, North Pole, Salcha, and Delta Junction):

Personal Use whitefish and sucker fishing with gillnets and fish wheels is closed. Fishing for whitefish and suckers in this area with other gear types remains open 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, subject to permit stipulations.

Effective **8:00 a.m. Monday, October 30**, personal use whitefish and sucker fishing will open with 4-inch or smaller mesh set gillnets limited to 60 feet or shorter.

A personal use permit and fishing license are required to fish for whitefish and sucker in the Fairbanks Nonsubsistence Area. Permits and licenses are available from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Fairbanks office or online at www.adfg.alaska.gov/store/.



This is an announcement by the ADF&G in cooperation with the USFWS. Federal Special Actions are posted on www.doi.gov/subsistence/fisheries-special-actions and shared on Facebook at www.facebook.com/subsistencealaska.

ADF&G Advisory Announcements and fish counts can be obtained by visiting www.facebook.com/YukonRiverFishingADFG or www.adfg.alaska.gov/yukonfishcounts.

To receive advisory announcements by email, sign up at www.cfnews.adfg.alaska.gov. To receive fish counts by email, sign up at www.list.state.ak.us/mailman/listinfo/yukonriverdailyupdate.

